

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
OFFICE - JOSE PT 89

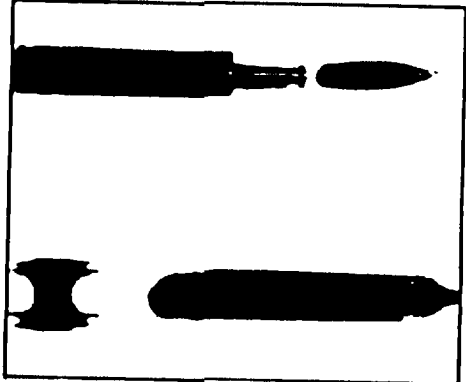
El Salvador: Insurgent Assassination Pistols

[REDACTED] recently acquired a description of a new, double-barreled handgun in the possession of a People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) commando cell in San Salvador. [REDACTED] the unit has [REDACTED] such weapons for use in killing senior Salvadoran political and military officials. The ERP [REDACTED] tested one of the pistols by killing a suspected government informant early this month. [REDACTED] had indicated earlier that such a pistol was in the hands of another ERP cell.

The weapon described is an extremely rare, silenced, double-barreled derringer identical to one recovered [REDACTED] an organization trained and armed by the Soviet KGB. This meticulously manufactured pistol probably was made in a special KGB facility that [REDACTED] develops special assassination weapons.

The ERP probably got these pistols via Nicaragua or Cuba, which supply much of the insurgents' Soviet Bloc ordnance. There is no evidence the insurgents have ever received weapons directly from the Soviets, but it is not likely Moscow would make such politically sensitive weapons available to allied states without some control over their distribution.

Information [REDACTED] indicates a gas-piston derringer may have been used in an unsuccessful attempt to kill a [REDACTED] defector in [REDACTED]. Two bullets lodged in the victim's torso, but no powder burns were found on his shirt, and witnesses heard no shots even though the victim believed he was shot at close range.



*Gas-piston derringer [REDACTED] ... short barrel length and limited ammunition capacity suggest intended for political assassinations rather than special military operations ... expended contained-gas cartridge shows piston used to expel the bullet at subsonic velocity, seal all noise-producing gas inside*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

30 September 1989

Approved for Release

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